



DIRK KEMPTHORNE  
GOVERNOR

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **KEMPTHORNE PRAISES PROPOSED WOLF MANAGEMENT CHANGES**

(BOISE) Governor Dirk Kempthorne praised today's announcement by U.S. Secretary of Interior Gale Norton that the Department has finalized a proposed rule that allows greater flexibility in the management of wolf populations in Idaho and Montana.

"The decision by the Bush Administration represents a significant step for the State of Idaho," Kempthorne said. "While total state management remains the ultimate goal, this new rule gives us an opportunity to assume many of the wolf management responsibilities currently performed by the federal government."

The Secretary's action will result in a change in federal regulations regarding wolf management, which is consistent with the Endangered Species Act's Section 10(j).

Last year, Governor Kempthorne signed legislation that allowed the Idaho Department of Fish & Game to work in partnership with the Governor's Office of Species Conservation on wolf management, formulating Idaho's commitment to appropriate wolf management.

"The old rule was designed to oversee a small, reintroduced population," said Jim Caswell, Administrator of the Idaho Office of Species Conservation. "This new rule offers the flexibility needed to manage a wolf population that has surpassed 500 wolves statewide."

Idaho Fish & Game Department Director Steve Huffaker added "Idaho has been preparing for this transition from federal to state wolf management. We look forward to the opportunity to bring all wildlife management together under state leadership."

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